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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 003001

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCOR](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: ANTI-CORRUPTION UPDATE FOR NOVEMBER 15

REF: A. BAGHDAD 2520
[1](#)B. BAGHDAD 2385
[1](#)C. BAGHDAD 2576
[1](#)D. BAGHDAD 2214

Classified By: ACCO Joseph Stafford, reason 1.4 (b and d)

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) Commission of Integrity (COI) head Judge Raheem Al-Ugaily asserted that there was resistance among some parliamentarians to submitting the legally required financial disclosure reports. The Baghdad Provincial Council's Integrity Committee chairman said that the Committee had uncovered "many cases" of corruption by municipal officials in the capital. The London-based journal, Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat, featured the claim by a "senior security official" that officials "bought" senior positions in the security forces. The COI is continuing its crackdown on forged educational and other documents. Anti-corruption officials agree that Iraq's land registration process is riddled with corruption, and the Embassy is assisting the Justice Ministry's effort at reform. END SUMMARY.

SWIPE AT PARLIAMENTARIANS

[1](#)2. (C) In recent conversation with Emboffs, COI head Judge Raheem Al-Ugaily asserted that there was widespread resistance within the parliament -- Council of Representatives (COR) -- to submission of annual financial disclosure reports required by law of senior officials in all three branches of government. He said that while "virtually all" executive and judicial branch officials had submitted the reports for 2008, only around 100 of the COR's 275 members had done so. (COMMENT: There has evidently been little, if any increase of late in the number of MP's submitting the reports; per ref a, Judge Raheem had previously announced that around 35 percent of COR members had submitted the document. END COMMENT) Judge Raheem stated that many parliamentarians seemed to view disclosure of their assets as an unacceptable infringement on their privacy. He went on to express concern that deputies might attempt to amend the current COI law so as to remove the financial disclosure requirement. He commented wryly that while he sought legislation to reform the COI, he was somewhat relieved that the COR would likely fail to pass the measure this year and hence the financial disclosure requirement would be preserved at least until 2010.

ANTI-CORRUPTION EFFORTS IN BAGHDAD

[1](#)3. (SBU) Dr. Abbas al-Dahlaki, Director of the Committee of Integrity of the Baghdad Provincial Council, recently met with mission officers. He indicated that the Council has authority to refer to the Commission of Integrity (COI) for investigation both administrative and criminal cases relating

to misuse of office by Baghdad provincial directorates as well as municipal officials. He noted there were some jurisdictional issues that had hindered action on some corruption cases, with both Baghdad Provincial Council and the Baghdad Amanat (city manager's office) claiming jurisdiction, but he hoped these would be sorted out in the near future. He said he had referred nine cases to COI for investigation from the Ministry of Health, of which 2 were for administrative actions and seven were for possible criminal infractions. He said he had referred "many" cases involving corruption on the part of municipal officials, a large number of which were for forging educational and other documents relating to the hiring of personnel. He noted that Iraqi law provides for a possible sentence of 7-15 years for such forgeries, if the personnel were found guilty.

CORRUPTION IN THE SECURITY FORCES

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14. (C) Following the horrific October 25 bomb explosions in Baghdad, Western and other media outlets carried allegations of corruption in the security forces, despite the lack of evidence that corruption -- e.g., payment of bribes to security personnel at checkpoints to allow passage of the bomb-rigged vehicles -- actually occurred in this incident. (COMMENT: Per ref b, the August 19 bombings in Baghdad also generated such media reports; as with the October 25 incident, there proved to be no concrete indication that corruption was a factor. END COMMENT) Illustrative of such reporting, on November 1, the London-based, Saudi-owned journal, Ash-Sharq Al-Awsat, featured claim by a "senior security official" in Iraq that "some posts in the security

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institutions, specifically that of battalion commander or division commander, are bought for tens of thousands of dollars." The official added, "this has been confirmed by a senior intelligence officer." (COMMENT: Sources agree that bribing superiors to obtain promotions and other corrupt practices remain a problem in Iraq's military and police forces nationwide, despite some reduction in abuses. Interior Minister Jawad Al-Bolani is given credit for weeding out some police officers involved in corruption and other criminal activities. END COMMENT)

CRACKDOWN ON FORGED DOCUMENTS

15. (SBU) The COI is continuing its crackdown, as reported in ref c, on forged educational and other documents. In a recent press statement, COI head Judge Raheem claimed that the COI was investigating "10,000 falsified educational certificates." He said the COI, as its investigations proceeded, was adding names to its "black list" of government officials found to have submitted forged educational documents in obtaining their jobs; he reported that names of officials at, in particular, the Ministries of Interior and Higher Education were added of late to the "black list." In another press statement, the COI announced that it had uncovered forged documents submitted by 76 candidates in the January 2009 Provincial Council elections and had referred the culprits to the judiciary for prosecution. Meanwhile, the Higher Education Ministry's Inspector General told the media that his office had ferreted out various Ministry employees implicated in the issuance of bogus educational documents. Another Ministry official stated that "nearly 99 percent" of educational certificates issued by Iranian institutions and presented by Iraqi students for admission to universities here were determined to be forged.

CORRUPTION IN LAND REGISTRATION OFFICES

16. (SBU) According to anti-corruption officials, Iraq's land

registration process, handled by the Justice Ministry, is plagued nationwide by widespread falsification of property deeds and other abuses, often with the collusion of Ministry employees. The Ministry's land registration offices in Baghdad were among GOI offices chosen for special focus under the GOI's anti-bribery campaign launched last June (ref d); employees in these offices were judged to be especially vulnerable to bribery. Indicative of the extent of the problem, recent months have witnessed various reports of corruption detected in land registration offices around the country. In recognition of the pressing need for modernization of Iraq's antiquated land registration system, which provides ample opportunities for abuse, the Embassy's Rule of Law Office is providing equipment and other assistance in support of the Justice Ministry's initiative to overhaul its land registration operations in Baghdad and elsewhere.

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